

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (original): An online shopping system comprising:
 - at least one user device which is connected onto Internet and for reading a merchant site on the Internet;
 - an agent device which is connected to said at least one user device and the merchant site, relays and sends a purchase instruction from said at least one user device to the merchant site; and
 - a settlement device which is connected to said agent device, and settles an account for a product purchased in accordance with the purchase instruction sent from said at least one user device,
 - said at least one user device including
 - purchase-instruction inputting means for inputting an instruction for purchasing a product on sale in the merchant site, and
 - a first purchase-instruction sending means for sending ID (identification) information of a user, as a first purchase instruction, together with information regarding the product input by said purchase-instruction inputting means to said agent device, and
 - said agent device including
 - user-information storage means for storing the ID information, user information regarding the user, and information regarding settlement means held by the user, in association with each other,
 - purchase-instruction receiving means for receiving the first purchase instruction sent from said first purchase instruction sending means,
 - user-information extraction means for searching said user-information storage means for user information based on the ID information of the user which is included in the first purchase-instruction,

and extracting corresponding information regarding the user and corresponding information regarding the settlement means, when said purchaseinstruction receiving means receives the first purchase instruction, second purchase-instruction sending means for sending, as a second purchase instruction, information regarding the product and being included in the first purchaseinstruction received by said purchase-instruction receiving means, and information regarding the user and being extracted by said user-information extraction means, to the merchant site, and

settlement requesting means for requesting said settlement device for settling an account for the purchased product, based on the information regarding the product and being included in the first purchase instruction received by said purchase-instruction receiving means and the information regarding the settlement means of the user and being extracted by said user-information extraction means.

2. (original): The online shopping system according to claim 1, wherein:

said agent device further includes inquiry means for inquiring whether the settlement means is valid, based on the information regarding the settlement means of the user which is extracted by said user-information extraction means; and

said second purchase-instruction sending means for inserting information representing that inquiring is performed by said inquiry means into the second purchase instruction, and sending the second purchase instruction to the merchant site.

3-4. (cancelled).

5. (original): The online shopping system according to claim 1, wherein said agent device and said settlement device are connected with each other through a private line.

6. (previously presented): An online shopping method for a user of a user device to purchase a product on sale in a merchant site, in an online shopping system comprising:

reading, at said user device which is connected to the Internet, a merchant site on the Internet;

replaying and sending, at an agent device connected to said user device and the merchant site, a purchase instruction sent from said user device to the merchant site;

settling, at a settlement device connected to said agent device, an account for a product purchased in accordance with the purchase instruction from said user device;

pre-registering ID information of the user, information regarding the user, and information regarding settlement means held by the user, in association with each other in a database of said agent device;

inputting an instruction for purchasing a product on sale in the shopping site which is read by said user device;

sending, as a first purchase instruction, the ID information of the user together with information regarding the input product from said user device to said agent device;

searching the database for user information based on the ID information of the user which is included in the first purchase instruction, and extracting corresponding information regarding the user and corresponding information regarding the settlement means, as performed by said agent device which has received the first purchase instruction;

sending, as a second purchase instruction, information regarding the user and being extracted from the database from said agent device to the merchant site, together with information regarding the input product; and

requesting, from said agent device, the settlement device for settling the account for the input product, based on information regarding the settlement means of the user and being extracted from the database.

7. (original): A user device which is connected to Internet, browses a merchant site on the Internet, and sends an instruction for purchasing a product on sale in the merchant site, said user device comprising:

purchase-instruction inputting means for inputting a purchase instruction of a product on sale in the browsed merchant site;

product-information extraction means for extracting information regarding a product to be purchased from contents of the browsed merchant site and information regarding specified settlement means; and

purchase-instruction sending means for sending, as a purchase instruction, the information regarding the product and being extracted by said product-information extraction means and the information regarding the settlement means, together with ID information of a user, to an agent device which is prepared separately from the merchant site and intermediates in a purchase process between the merchant site and said user device.

8. (original): The user device according to claim 7, further comprising:
merchant-site determination means for determining whether the merchant site is browsed; and
instruction-input permission means for permitting, when said merchant-site determination means determines that the merchant site is browsed, an input of an instruction from said purchase-instruction inputting means.

9. (original): The user device according to claim 7, wherein said purchase-instruction inputting means is prepared separately from instruction means included in the contents of the browsed merchant site.

10. (original): A user device including a memory for storing a program, a processor for executing the program, an input device for inputting an instruction of a user, a display device for displaying information, and a communications device for transmitting/receiving information with a merchant site served up on Internet, wherein said processor executes the program stored in said memory, thereby:

accessing said merchant site from said communications device, and controlling said communications device to receive contents of said merchant site;

displaying the contents of the merchant site which are received by said communications device on said display device;

permitting the user to input an instruction for purchasing a product on sale in the contents of the merchant site which are displayed on said display device;

extracting information regarding the product to be purchased from the contents of the merchant site displayed on said display device and information regarding specified settlement means; and

controlling said communications device to send, as a purchase instruction, the extracted information regarding the product and the information regarding the settlement means, together with ID information of the user to an agent device, which is prepared separately from the merchant site and intermediates in a product purchase process between said user device and said merchant site.

11. (original): A method for browsing a merchant site served up on Internet using a computer device, and for sending an instruction for purchasing a product on sale in the browsed merchant site, said method comprising:

a step of inputting an instruction for purchasing the product on sale in the browsed merchant site;

a step of extracting information regarding the product to be purchased in the browsed merchant site and information regarding specified settlement means, when the instruction is input; and

a step of sending, as a purchase instruction, the extracted information regarding the product and the information regarding the settlement means, together with ID information of a user, to an agent device which is prepared separately from the merchant site and intermediates in a purchase process between the computer device and the merchant site.

12. (original): An agent device which is connected to a user device for browsing a merchant site served up on Internet, the merchant site, and a settlement device for settling an account for a product purchased in accordance with a purchase instruction from the user device, said agent device comprising:

user-information storage means for storing ID information of a user using said user device, information regarding the user, and information regarding settlement means held by the user, in association with each other;

purchase-instruction receiving means for receiving, as a first purchase instruction, from said user device, information regarding the product to be purchased by the user on sale in the merchant site and the ID information of the user;

user-information extraction means for searching said user-information storage means for use information based on the ID information included in the first purchase instruction, and extracting corresponding information regarding the user and corresponding information regarding settlement means;

inquiry means for inquiring of said settlement device whether the settlement means is valid, based on the information regarding the settlement means and being extracted by said user-information extraction means;

purchase-instruction sending means for sending, as a second purchase instruction, to the merchant site, the information regarding the user and being extracted by said user-information extraction means and information representing that inquiring is performed by said inquiry means, together with the information regarding the product and being included in the first purchase instruction received by said purchase instruction receiving means; and

settlement requesting means for requesting said settlement device for setting a bill for a purchased product, based on the information regarding a product and being included in the second purchase instruction received by said purchase-instruction receiving means and the information regarding the settlement means and being extracted by said user-information extraction means.

13. (original): An agent device comprising: a memory for storing a program; a processor for executing the program; a communications device for transmitting/receiving information with a merchant site served up on Internet, a user device used by a user purchasing a product on sale online in the merchant site, and a settlement device for settling an account for a product purchased in accordance with a purchase instruction from said user device; and a database for registering ID infoiniation of the user using the user device, information regarding the user, and infoiuiation regarding settlement means held by the user, and wherein said processor executes the program stored in said memory, thereby:

controlling said communications device to receive, as a first purchase instruction from said user device, the ID information of the user together with information regarding a product to be purchased by the user on sale in the merchant site;

searching the database for user information based on the ID information included in the first purchase instruction received by said communications device, and extracting corresponding information regarding the user and corresponding information regarding settlement means;

controlling said communications device to inquire of said settlement device whether the settlement means is valid, based on the information regarding the settlement means and being extracted from the database;

controlling said communications device to send, as a second purchase instruction, the infoii cation regarding the user and being extracted from the database and information representing that said settlement means is inquired, together with the information regarding the product and being included in the first purchase instruction received by said communications device to the merchant site; and

controlling said communications device to request said settlement device for settling an account for a purchased product included in the first purchase instruction received by said communications device, based on the information regarding the settlement means of the user and being extracted from the database.

14-15. (cancelled).

16. (original): A method executed in a computer device, which is connected to a user device for reading a merchant site served up on Internet, the merchant site, and a settlement device for settling an account for a product purchased in accordance with a purchase instruction from said user device, said method comprising:

a step of pre-registering ID information of a user using said user device, user information regarding the user, and information regarding settlement means held by the user;

a step of receiving, as a first purchase instruction, ID information of the user together with information regarding a product to be purchased by the user on sale in the merchant site, from said user device;

a step of searching said database based on the ID information included in the received first purchase instruction, and extracting corresponding information regarding the user and corresponding information regarding the settlement means;

a step of inquiring of said settlement device whether the settlement means is valid, based on the information regarding the settlement means of the user and being extracted from said database;

a step of sending, as a second purchase instruction, the information regarding the user and being extracted from said database and information representing that said settlement means is inquired, together with the information regarding the product and being included in the received first purchase instruction, to the merchant site; and

a step of requesting said settlement device for settling an account for the purchased product included in the received purchase instruction, based on the information regarding the settlement means of the user and being extracted from the database.

17. (cancelled).

18. (original): A computer readable recording medium recording a program making a computer device, which is connected onto Internet and capable of browsing a merchant site served up the Internet, function as:

purchase-instruction inputting means for inputting an instruction for purchasing a product on sale in the browsed merchant site;

product-information extraction means for extracting information regarding a product to be purchased and information regarding specified settlement means from contents of the browsed merchant site, when the instruction is input from said purchase-instruction inputting means; and

purchase-instruction sending means for sending, as a purchase instruction, the information regarding the product and being extracted by said product-information extraction means and the information regarding the settlement means, together with ID information of a user, to an agent device, which is prepared separately from the merchant site and intermediates in a purchase process between the user and the merchant site.

19. (original): The computer readable recording medium according to claim 18, wherein the program makes the computer device further function as:

merchant-site determination means for determining whether a merchant site is being browsed; and

instruction-input permission means for permitting an input of an instruction from said purchase-instruction inputting means, when said merchant-site determination means determined that the merchant site is being browsed.

20. (currently amended): A computer readable recording medium recording a program making a computer device, connected to a user device for browsing a merchant site served up on Internet, the merchant site, and a settlement device for settling an account for a product purchased in accordance with a purchase instruction from said user device, function as:

user-information storage means for storing ID information of a user using said user device, user information of the user, and information regarding settlement means held by the user, in association with each other;

purchase-instruction receiving means for receiving, as a first purchase instruction from said user device, the ID information of the user, together with information regarding a product to be purchased by the user on sale in the merchant site;

user-information extraction means for searching said user-information storage means for the user information based on the ID information included in the first purchase instruction, and extracting corresponding information regarding the user and corresponding information regarding settlement means, when said purchase-instruction receiving means receives a first purchase instruction;

inquiry means for inquiring of said settlement device whether the settlement means is valid, based on the information regarding the settlement means of the user and being extracted by said user-information extraction means;

purchase-instruction sending means for sending, as a second purchase instruction, the information regarding the user and being extracted by said user-information extraction means and information representing that inquiring is performed by said inquiry means, together with the information regarding the product included in the first purchase instruction received by said purchase-instruction receiving means, to the merchant site;

and

settlement requesting means for requesting said settlement device for settling an account for a product, based on the information regarding the product and being included in the second purchase instruction received by said purchase-instruction receiving means, and the information regarding the settlement means of the user and being extracted by said user-information extraction means.

21-24. (cancelled).